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WHAT DOES CHRISTIANITY PROFESS TO GIVE IN THE PRESENT TO ITS FOLLOWERS?

Two Sermons

PREACHED AT

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH,

HIGHBURY,

BY THE

REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A.,

IN ANSWER TO A

QUESTION IN THE "JEWISH PULPIT."

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REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A.

(Vicar.)

ANSWER I.

TO A

Question proposed in "Jewish Pulpit."

"WHAT DOES CHRISTIANITY PROFESS TO GIVE IN THE PRESENT TO ITS FOLLOWERS?"

GENESIS iv. 4.—"*And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.*"

THE chief incident recorded in the fourth chapter of the Book of Genesis, is that of the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. It is not necessary to suppose that that sad event happened when Abel and Cain were very young men. In fact, we might almost venture to fix the date of it, at about one hundred and thirty years after the creation of Adam. For we are told in one passage, that a child called "Seth" was

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born to Adam and Eve, in such a way that he seemed sent purposely by God to supply the place made vacant by the first death in the family; and therefore, we may infer, that he was born at a time when the murder of Abel was a comparatively recent thing. But we are told also, a few verses after, that Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born. Putting then these two statements together, we seem at liberty to conclude that the first century passed by without the loss of any human life, and that it was not until the earlier years of the second century had dawned upon the world, that the first blood-mark was made upon the hitherto unsullied page of human history.

I do not know that the point is one of any real importance; but, seeing that great crimes are of gradual growth, and are usually at least the sudden outbreak of forces of evil that have been accumulating for long, the view just taken may enable us the better to understand the nature of the terrible tragedy, to which our attention is directed in the chapter before us.

The whole subject presents itself to my mind in the following way.

Cain, the elder child, was, probably, of a moody, and self-willed disposition, from his birth. It may be, that the shadow of the fall—if he was born soon after the expulsion from Eden,—rested upon him, and tinged his character. At all events, he was very unlike his brother Abel in disposition and habits; possibly, in his obedience to his parents; and, certainly, in his feelings towards God. In early days, when they were boys in their father's house, the difference between them would not be so apparent. They would receive the same instruction; they would join in the same family worship; they would take their part—as far as children could do so—in the more important religious solemnities, whenever those solemnities occurred. But when they had grown up to manhood, and had married wives, and children were born to them, and when their habits had become fixed, and their characters consolidated, then it would be clearly seen that the two brothers had entered upon widely divergent paths; and, indeed, had constituted themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, the heads and representatives of two very dissimilar sections of the human community. There was one occasion on which the dissimilarity between the men displayed itself in a very marked, and, as the result showed, in a very distressing manner. That was, when sacrifice had to be offered. Both men, it appears, built altars; and laid a sacrifice upon them. But

Cain's offering was an offering of the fruits of the earth; whilst Abel's was a victim, a firstling of his flock, which had, of course, been previously slaughtered; for we are informed that the "fat" was presented to God. And what was the result? If the two men had been left to be guided by their own judgment, or preferences, and Cain, as a husbandman, had brought as he naturally would have done—fruits of the earth; and Abel, as a shepherd, had brought a kid, or a lamb,—both presenting, as it were, samples of their worldly wealth, and acknowledging that they received all temporal good from the bounty of the Most High, it would be difficult to understand why any favour would have been shown to one brother over the other. And yet a distinction, and a marked one, as you know—was made. God rejected the sacrifice of Cain. He accepted the offering of Abel, possibly, though we are not so informed, by sending the lightning-flash from Heaven to consume the sacrifice, and to reduce it to ashes. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering." We seem driven, then, to the conclusion, that there had been some intimation of the Divine will in the matter; and that whilst that intention had been regarded by one brother, it had been entirely disregarded, and set at nought by the other.

But I would ask you, brethren, to look into this matter, a little more carefully, and closely, before we proceed any further.

I.—It is perfectly true that we have no direct information in the narrative as to the Divine origin of sacrifice; by which I mean, sacrifice attended with the shedding of blood, and with the consequent death of the victim offered; but the *indirect* evidence on the subject given in this passage, seems to be exceedingly cogent.

In the first place, there is an intimation of a Divine suggestion in the fact that Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock; and after slaughtering them, offered the fat.

You may say—Abel—a shepherd—would naturally offer sheep; in fact, he had nothing else, and nothing else of importance, to offer; and as naturally he would offer the best and the choicest of his flock, and the best and the choicest parts of them, to show his gratitude and devotion to the Lord. True; *but what suggested to him, that the Lord would be pleased with bloodshedding?* Is there not something revolting in the idea of cutting the throat of an innocent victim, as part of a religious service, and pouring out its blood? And could such a act be justified by anything short of absolute

necessity? A man, like Abel, would surely shrink instinctively, as you and I would, from such a procedure. What reason, then, had he to believe—if he had no special intimation on the point—that the Lord would be pleased with bloodshedding?

And again, *why was the Lord pleased with bloodshedding?* Would it not have been more natural to suppose, apart from any direct revelation to the contrary, that the good and loving God would have been better pleased with Cain's offering, with fruits and flowers, the produce of the earth, which He had adorned with His bounty, and given for a possession to the sons of men? Or shall we say that Cain was a stingy fellow, and gave as little as he could help of his property, as an offering to God; whereas, Abel was thankful and liberal? It seems hardly likely. The whole narrative conveys the impression, that the difference between the two men's sacrifices, lay in the character of the offerings, and not in the amount of the thing offered.

But there is, brethren, a stronger argument still. If we are justified in supposing that the "faith" displayed in the younger brother's sacrifice was that which made it acceptable to God, (and about this point we are not very likely, I think, to disagree), we are entitled to ask, what was the object of the faith? what was the thing that the faith laid hold of, if it was not some revelation on the subject, or some instruction, however slight, given to men by God Himself? Belief in a God? both brothers had that. Belief that God was the Author of their being, and the Sustainer of their lives? that, too, both brothers had. Belief that they were bound to acknowledge that they were tenants at will, and that it was their duty to render gratitude and thanks for all the benefits they had received, and were receiving—of this, both the brothers were possessed. What then was the faith which Abel was characterized by, and which made him superior to Cain, if it did not attach itself to some statement which God had made? to some specific revelation of God's will, concerning the method, by which He was to be approached—which Abel was induced to accept, and obey, and which Cain saw fit to reject? And as to that supposed revelation itself, the whole history of the chosen people may very well help us to conjecture what it was. Turn upon this early chapter of Genesis the light of the teachings of the Levitical Law. The system which Moses established there is nothing, if it be not sacrificial. Look at the account of the day of atonement, and read of the "transgressions and the sins of the people of

Israel being laid on the head of the scape-goat." Remember the blood of the victim sprinkled upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat; and thus "atonement" being made for the holy place, because of "the uncleannesses of the children of Israel." Cast your glance on into the seventeenth chapter of Leviticus, and read the words, "the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I," i.e., the Lord, "have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement, by reason of the life."

Do I say, brethren, that Abel had the clear and distinct understanding of the Divine meaning that was vouchsafed to the children of Israel? Of course not. But I do say that the intimation of God's will as to sacrifice, which Abel received and acted upon, was in the same line as the fuller revelation given in the Mosaic Law. Doubtless, the patriarch saw very dimly the truth, that sin was deserving of death. It required a long and laborious process of education to bring Israel up to that point. Doubtless, Abel could not very easily trace the connection between the rite which he was enjoined to perform, and the promised deliverer, who was to crush the serpent's head, though at the expense of the bruising of his own heel. That, too, took time to reveal clearly to the children of men. But he did see, and he did see distinctly enough, that God was to be approached in only one way—and *that* the way of sacrifice; and that, if he did not come, bringing as his ground and plea of acceptance the life-blood of an innocent victim, he might as well not come at all. Observe, then, brethren, if the interpretation I have given be the correct one—observe what follows. It follows, that to approach God in a way of your own, bringing something of your own—your good deeds, your alms, your prayers, your praises, or anything else, for the purpose of recommending yourself to His favour—is to take the most certain method of ensuring your rejection. We must come to Him on quite another footing, bringing with us an offering of atonement. And this is precisely what we Christians do, if we are Christians indeed. The blood of bulls and of goats, of kids and of lambs,—has passed away. All that was preparatory, and educational. But the thing which they signified, and to which they pointed, that remains behind. That lasts and lasts for ever—the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. We do not then dare to approach God unsheltered, and offer Him our gifts. To act so,—would be to act like Cain. We take Abel's line; *we come with the blood.* All that the offering of the blood means, we mean. And we believe and are

sure, that not for our own sake, but for the sake of Him Who died upon the Cross of Calvary, the Holy and Just Lord God Almighty forgives us our sin, and accepts us into the family of His own reconciled, and loving children.

II.—I have a second thought, brethren, to commend to your consideration. It seems necessary that God should secure a man's heart, before He accepts the man's gifts. The person first, the gifts afterwards,—is the Divine order. And yet, if we endeavour to win the Divine favour by our own performances, we are really inverting the proper order, and offering God something else at the time when He is asking for our heart. Brethren, *do* let us begin at the right end. Our gifts,—what does God care for our gifts, considered in themselves? Is God poor, that He requires us to enrich Him? The gold and the silver are His; the unseen and unimagined treasures of countless worlds, are His; and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills. He openeth His hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness. Or, is He weak, that He needs our help, and calls upon us to strengthen His hands? What says Isaiah—"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by name by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth." Why, brethren, it is simply absurd to suppose that God wants anything at our hands. And shall we believe that the way to secure His favour, is to heap up our gifts, our gold and our silver, or our prayers and our praises, or our fasts and our self-mortifications, until we have done enough to make Him our friend? The very thought is discreditable—discreditable both to man, and to God. And yet, brethren, there *is* one thing that God wants from us, and one thing that we, strangely enough, have the power to deny Him. I mean our hearts. God is love; and He yearns for the love of the creatures He has made. He cannot be satisfied without it. It is not our offerings that He cares for, however many, and however costly they may be—but our love. And so, as we Christians thankfully believe, He has set Himself to win our love. He went the right way to work,—if I may dare to say so,—when He gave His own Son, for our salvation. Our souls, oppressed with a sense of sin, and alienated from God by reason of it, cry out loudly for an atonement. Moses, in every page of his law, adds His strong voice to that cry. He tells us, that sin cannot be put away except by sacrifice. The patriarch Abel comes forward and corroborates that testimony. When he approached God, he tells us, that he approached Him with the firstlings of his flock,

and with the fat thereof; and that the Lord had respect unto his offering. Yes, we crave a sacrifice, by which our sins shall be put away. We want a victim. And that victim hangs, for us, on the blood-stained Cross of Calvary, to which not the Jew only, but the Gentile also, not the sins of others only, but our sins—affixed Him. And looking to what was done there, and trusting to what was done there, we know that we have forgiveness, forgiveness full and free,—and we enter into peace. More than this, the old enmity is, at the same time, and by the same means, done away. Who will not love a God, whose love for us, is so great, so intense, so consuming, that He sends His own Son to die for us; not a man; not an angel; not an archangel; but His own Son—His own co-equal, and co-eternal Son? There is nothing in fact, that God could give up that He would not give up, for the purpose of winning us over. And the belief of this, when we do believe it, rushes in like a strong irresistible tide into the heart, sweeps away the old distrust and dislike and hatred, and replaces it with gratitude and love.

From this point,—brethren, I pray you mark me,—begins a new career. Everything is changed. A fresh character is given to everything we do. The relation between God and man is righted. Now, the offering is acceptable, because it comes from a heart full of love. It was nothing before; it is much now. Now, for the first time, the worship is acceptable, because it is offered in the right way, and from the right motive. We do not work *for* salvation; we work *from* salvation. And the life henceforth is one worthy both of God and of man, because it is the expression of the feelings of a soul which has thankfully consecrated itself to a loving God, in the Gospel of His Son. Yes, brethren, as I said before, let us begin at the beginning. "The Lord had respect unto Abel, and his offering;"—unto the person of Abel first; unto what Abel did, afterwards.

III.—I have one thought more to suggest; and with it, I will conclude.

I will put it in the form of a question. "What certainty have I about my soul, if I am not resting upon Jesus Christ, and upon what Jesus Christ has done for me?"

Here am I, a sinful and imperfect and fallen being, with a future world before me, of which I know but little, but for which I do know that I must be prepared. Well, I prepare myself by doing what I call "good deeds,"—by almsgiving, by prayer, by living a pure and conscientious life; it may be by fasts, and by mortifications. (Mark you, brethren, I say not a

word against these things, provided they are kept in their proper place, and not made saviours of.) Well, I do these things, do them earnestly, do them laboriously, do them persistently, do them perhaps throughout the years of a long life. But this is the thought that troubles me—*how can I be sure, after all, that I have done enough to merit God's favour?* God, perhaps, may look upon these things with different eyes from mine. He may see flaws in them which I do not see, and which may render it impossible for Him to accept them. How do I know?

And again, what about my sins? How are they to be disposed of? How are they to be put away? Man may tell me that my good deeds are to be set off against my bad deeds, and that so I shall be forgiven. But where does God say so? Not in the Scripture. And besides, even if there were a striking of the balance in that way, how do I know that the balance shall be struck in my favour? Oh, brethren, where am I to find *certainty,* under such circumstances? And what if, as the end draws nigh, and the world is receding from my grasp, and old things, old occupations, old interests, are fading away and becoming shadows, and the light of eternity is beginning to break in upon me, and I feel myself summoned before the judgment-seat to receive the award of deeds done in the body,—what if then the conviction should fasten upon me, that I have taken, all along, the wrong course, and that the offering of my life will, like Cain's, not be accepted, because it has been made without the appointed sacrifice? God keep us all from self-delusion and mistake! God grant to us all to be amongst the number of those, who, in the great day that is coming, shall hear, and hear in peace, the solemn words—"Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me *by sacrifice.*"

ANSWER II.

TO A

Question in "Jewish Pulpit."

"WHAT DOES CHRISTIANITY PROFESS TO GIVE IN THE PRESENT TO ITS FOLLOWERS?"

PSALM CX. 4.—"*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*"

IN the days when Jesus of Nazareth was living on the earth, the Psalm from which my text has been taken, was regarded by the Jews—first, as a Psalm of King David; then as having been composed by the monarch under Divine inspiration; and lastly, as having for its great theme and subject, the expected Messiah Himself. In those days, too, as many of us will remember, a certain memorable conversation took place, about the meaning of the Psalm. The question was put to the Pharisees,—"What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? Of course the answer was ready,—"The Son of David." "But if,"—was the rejoinder,—"but if He is the Son of David, and nothing more, how is it that David, speaking as an inspired man, calls Him, Lord? The words of David are these: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." If David, then, call Him, Lord, how is He his Son?"

The question, brethren, was a difficult one to answer under the circumstances.

Say that the Psalm was not written by David; or, say, that it is not inspired; or, say, that it does not refer to Messiah, but to somebody else; and I suppose you can manage to extricate yourself out of the difficulty. But the Pharisees who were addressed, admitted all these three points. They themselves held that the Psalm was inspired; that it was composed by David; and that Messiah, and Messiah's king-

dom, constituted the subject of it. What then were they to reply? There was, as you will see, only one reply possible—that there is a mystery about Messiah's person; that He is partaker of a nature, which puts Him above David, and causes David, whose descendant He is, to offer Him, anticipatory homage. Were Messiah a mere man, the language of the Psalm could not have been possible, and David could not have called Messiah his Lord. What is Messiah then? "He is the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man." But this reply, the only one possible under the circumstances, the Pharisees were unwilling to make; and they had nothing to do for it, but just to hold their peace.

That we Christians adhere to the old interpretation, and believe it correct,—I need hardly remind you. To us, the language of the inspired Psalmist presents no difficulty It is consistent throughout; and perfect intelligible. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of David, according to the flesh, for He was descended from him; but He was also "declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." I have no intention, however, of dwelling upon this part of the Psalm, important as it is. I merely allude to it. My purpose to-night is rather to draw your attention to the particular statement of the text, that the Messiah when He came, was to be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." I say "Messiah, when He came;" for no one, I presume, whether he believes, or does not believe that Messiah has already come, will consider that these words refer to anybody else, but the Christ of God. Let us proceed then, at once, to the subject before us.

I.—If we turn to the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Genesis, we find there the first mention of Melchizedek; and the circumstances are these. Abram, the friend of God, the father and prince of the Jewish people, had become a soldier, for the first, and, I suppose, for the last time, in his life. His nephew Lot had been taken prisoner by some powerful princes, who had made an invasion into Palestine; and had been carried away into the neighbourhood of Damascus. When Abram heard of what had happened, he armed three hundred and eighteen trained servants, born and brought up in his house, and with a few auxiliaries hastily gathered together, pursued the marauding host. On this occasion, Abram, who was not a soldier by profession, and had not been, in any sense, educated to warfare, developed a fine military instinct. With a small force, he had to cope with a host of disciplined warriors; but he seems to have known what is the effect of

a sudden surprise, especially upon an oriental army; and accordingly, dividing his band, and falling upon his enemies by night, when they were sleeping in absolute security, probably after a carouse in honour of the victory they had won, he crushed, and scattered them, putting the princes and many of their followers to the sword, and recovering all the captives and all the goods that had been taken away.

As he was returning in triumph to the tents he had left, and had arrived somewhere in the neighbourhood of what afterwards became the famous city of Jerusalem, there met him a reverend figure, who brought solemnly forth bread and wine; whether for the refreshment of the wearied fighters, or for any other purpose, we are not informed. This man was called "Melchizedek." He was king, and priest, uniting the two offices in his one person; King of Salem, and priest of the Most High God. He bestowed upon Abram his priestly blessing—"Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of Heaven, and earth." And Abram, recognising his dignity and the claims of his official position, rendered Him homage. He gave Him tithes of all. Why? Clearly, because Melchizedek stood before him, as, in some true sense, a representative of Jehovah Himself.

I ask you to notice, amongst other things, the mystery which surrounds the person of Melchizedek. He comes into the sacred narrative, without preface and without warning. All that is told about him, is brought within the compass of three verses. He appears suddenly, and disappears as suddenly; and, perhaps, if circumstances had been different, we should have considered for a moment who Melchizedek was, and why he was mentioned, and then should have dismissed the matter, altogether, from our minds. But a thousand years passes by, and Melchizedek's name emerges again in connection with the Jewish Messiah, in an inspired Psalm of King David, which depicts to us in a most graphic and striking way the anointed one of God. As we read the Psalm, it is clear that Melchizedek is a personage of no slight importance. He is a representative, a type of the coming Messiah. And we must look at the one, if we are really desirous of understanding the character and the work of the other. This, then, brethren, let us do. Let us compare, as well as we can, the two figures; Messiah, and Melchizedek.

II.—If they are to correspond, there must be found in Messiah these things. First,—profound mystery. Melchizedek, as you have doubtless observed, is a priest without a genealogy.

But where else do you find a priest without a genealogy? Do you remember what Nehemiah says about some men, who claimed to be admitted to the privileges of the priesthood? "These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, *but it was not proved;* therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood." To be able to trace their genealogy, was absolutely essential to the members of the Aaronic priesthood. Melchizedek, then, was a priest of a totally different kind from the sons of Aaron. But there was mystery of another kind about Him. Ingenious men have expended a vast amount of ingenuity, in conjecturing who He was. They might have spared themselves the trouble. It is clear, from the manner in which He flashes into the sacred narrative, and from the abrupt manner in which He quits it, that we are not intended to know. Whence He came, and whither He went, we are, purposely, not informed. There is no mention of the beginning, or of the termination of His priesthood; or even whether it had a beginning, or a termination at all. All is veiled in clouds. And this we believe to be intentional, indicating that there was a marked difference between the priesthood of this man, and the priesthood of those who are called after the order of Aaron. If, then, Messiah is to correspond with Melchizedek, we should expect to find a profound and unfathomable mystery about Him.

Yet again, the priesthood of Melchizedek, as it is presented to us in Genesis, is an unchanging office; not transferred by one man to another; and not subject to succession. And with this agree the words of the Psalm—"Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Messiah, then, if He is to correspond with Melchizedek, can be no mortal man, holding an office which He drops at death, and hands on to another.

Once more, He must not be merely a Priest, He must be a King as well; *a Priest upon His Throne.*

Once more, He must receive His office in a peculiar way. The Aaronic priests were appointed by a Divine ordinance. The privilege was placed in the family of Aaron. Aaron and his successors held the office, by God's order. But, in this case, there was the speciality of a solemn Divine oath. "The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

And lastly, if the correspondence between Melchizedek and Messiah is to be carried out, there must be superiority on the part of Messiah to Abraham, and to all Abraham's seed, in-

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cluding of course, the sons of Aaron. "Why?" you ask. Look (I reply) at the narrative in Genesis. Abraham receives the blessing of Melchizedek. Abraham therefore stands, officially at least, below Melchizedek. Abraham pays Melchizedek tithe; and in so doing, acknowledges the superiority of Melchizedek's position, from the spiritual point of view; and in Abraham, all who descend from Abraham of course, are of necessity involved.

III.—And if this be so, brethren, what follows? Why clearly it follows, that at the time when this 110th Psalm was written, there was something beyond and above the Aaronic priesthood, which had to be expected in the future; a greater, a higher, a nobler, a more enduring priesthood. And seeing that the Aaronic priesthood has now, confessedly, passed away, is it not, at least, probable, that this priesthood, which the Word of God predicted when David wrote three thousand years ago, and which was to be the successor and the complement of the Aaronic priesthood, *has actually come*, and is even now being fulfilled, to the unspeakable benefit and blessing of all who will consent to take advantage of it? We Christians assert that it has come. According to our view, every feature of the Melchizedek priesthood is reproduced in Jesus of Nazareth, whom we call Jesus Christ; and in Him alone.

Observe on what we ground this opinion. There is a mystery about the "Priest after the order of Melchizedek," which there could not be about a mere man. And our great High Priest is the Incarnate Son of God. His Name is Wonderful. Touching humanity on one side—He is our Brother; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—a simple, homely, loving, genial man. Touching Deity on the other—He is the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the ancient of days, the Prince of Peace. Then the priesthood is everlasting. "Thou art a priest for ever." And of whom is that true? of whom *can* it be true, but of Jesus Christ? The superiority to Abraham, we find in Jesus; and in Him alone. And again, we believe Him to unite in His own person, the regal and sacerdotal offices. He offered the sacrifice of Calvary. He offered Himself; and the offering, so we are persuaded, was accepted by God. With blood He entered, as the Aaronic High Priest did on the day of atonement, into the Holiest place—the very presence of the Eternal. There He is ever living to make intercession for us. But there He is also reigning, a Priest upon His Throne—exalted because of His obedience unto death, the death of the Cross—angels, and principalities, and powers being made subject unto Him—

swaying the sceptre of the universe; seated, as the Psalm tells us, at God's right hand, until He makes His enemies His footstool. Nowhere else, brethren, do we find, or can we hope to find, the Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Nor need we wait for Him. *We have got him now.* And so for us (and we thank God for His undeserved goodness) for us, Heaven is not empty. We need not construct an imaginary advocate and representative, by sending up what we call our "good deeds" to plead for us, before the throne of God. We have a real person who represents us—Jesus, the Son of God. In Him meet all the lines, both of the Aaronic and of the Melchizedek Priesthood. In Him we have everything that we require, for our help here, for our blessing, in the world of the hereafter. In Him we have forgiveness. He has made atonement for us. His blood cleanseth us from all sin. Through Him our prayers ascend into the presence of God. From Him comes down all life, and power, and grace, and joy, all comfort in sorrow, and all strength in temptation. More than this, He rules as King; and we believe, that by His almighty power, and by His unwatchful providence, He makes all things, whatever they may be, work together for our good.

Shall I stop here? No! I have more to say. Great as He is, seated on the Throne of the universe, and engaged in carrying out the vast and inscrutable purposes of the Most High, He has an individualising knowledge of and care for each one of us. He bears our names upon His heart before God. He understands us. He consoles us. He upholds us with His love. He is our Saviour, our High Priest, our King; but He is also, of His infinite condescension, our companion, and our friend. Yes! we thank God for Jesus Christ. We thank God, that for us, Heaven is not empty, because we have there an advocate with the Father,—"the Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

"Seeing, then, brethren, that we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the Heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a High Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."